

## FACTSHEET

### 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

In general, the president and vice president of the United States are elected in a two-step process. The first step is carried out by the electorate of the nation; and the second by a group of people called the "Presidential Electors." This system of electing the president and vice president is called the Electoral College System. The System is designed to ensure the indirect election of the president.

Early in a presidential election year (once every four years), political parties or groups (in each state and the District of Columbia) meet and select "electors" according to their respective party/group rules. Each State is permitted a number of "electors" equal to its representation in Congress. The District of Columbia has three representatives to Congress and is permitted three "electors." By this formula, the State of Hawaii is allotted four "electors."

In the State of Hawaii, the names of the presidential and vice presidential candidates are listed (as a team) on the general election ballot instead of the "electors." Registered voters in the State of Hawaii vote for the presidential and vice presidential team of their choice, but are really selecting the "electors" (represented by the presidential and vice presidential team listed on the ballot) who will actually elect the president and vice president of the United States.

In 48 States (Hawaii included) and the District of Columbia, the "electors" are elected by a plurality of the popular vote for the presidential and vice presidential candidates, i.e., the ticket garnering the most votes. In Maine and Nebraska, two electors are chosen by a statewide popular vote and the remainder by the popular vote within each Congressional district.

The chosen electors of each state will meet on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December at 2:00 p.m. to cast their votes for president and vice president. In Hawaii, the next meeting of the electors will take place at 2:00 p.m. on Monday **December 13, 2004** at the State Capitol.

A president is elected if he or she receives an absolute majority of the electoral votes cast. If no majority is received, the House of Representatives chooses the winner from the top three candidates. Each State delegation has one vote for this purpose. Two elections have been decided in this manner.

The vice president is also selected in the same manner, but in a separate vote. If no candidate receives the majority vote, the United States Senate selects the winner from the top two candidates. Each senator has one vote in this process. The Senate has not voted in this manner since 1836.

The Twelfth Amendment (1804) required the electors to cast two separate ballots, one for the president and a second for the vice president. The Amendment is the only change made to the Electoral College System.

This Fact Sheet is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used as an authority on the Hawaii election law and candidate deadlines. Requirements and/or deadlines may change pending changes in legislation. Consult the Hawaii Revised Statutes and other sources for more detailed and accurate requirements.

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